

## **CHAPTER 3000    CUSTOMER RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION**



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## **3100 COMMUNICATIONS**

### **3110 Citizen Participation**

The department's requirements for creating, terminating, ensuring coordination of, and limiting duplication of advisory groups are contained in DSHS Administrative Policy 2.05.

### **3120 Legislative Relations**

- A. The department's expectations for staff relationships with legislative bodies and public officials are contained in DSHS Administrative Policy 1.01.
- B. Departmental requirements regarding staff interaction with members of Congress and their staff are contained in DSHS Administrative Policy 1.04.

### **3130 Media Relations**

The department's public information policy is contained in DSHS Administrative Policy 2.08. It requires maintenance of an open press policy and standardized procedures for media contact.

### **3140 Publications Management**

The department's requirements for publications developed for distribution to audiences other than DSHS employees are contained in DSHS Administrative Policy 2.07. In addition, before publication, draft materials are to be reviewed and approved by the appropriate Director and the Assistant Secretary.

## **3200 CITIZEN COMPLAINTS**

### **3210 Expectation**

- A. Client and community complaints regarding Children's Administration (CA) actions, including those of the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Division of Licensed Resources (DLR), will be reviewed in a timely, thorough, and fair manner.
  - 1. Constituent relations staff assists clients, foster parents, and other affected individuals in resolving complaints and grievances regarding Children's Administration (CA) policies and procedures, or the application of a policy or procedure related to CA programs.  
**WAC 388-39-030**
  - 2. Under RCW 74.13.045, constituent relations staff may inquire into, determine fact, and facilitate the resolution of disputes and complaints. The number for Constituent Relations is 1-800-723-4831.

- B. The department endeavors to resolve complaints at the lowest level possible but believes all levels of the organization must be accountable and responsible to individuals who are experiencing difficulties with CA's services.

**RCW 74.13.045**

### **3220 Review Process**

- A. To facilitate informal review and resolution of issues, CA will follow the steps outlined in chapter 388-74 WAC, Complaint Resolution, and will comply with the requirements of RCW 74.13.045, Complaint Resolution Process.
- B. The citizen complaint procedures do not apply to:
  - 1. Disputes regarding written personal service contracts or financial agreements;
  - 2. Contested standard rate payments, contested rate payments, or exceptional payments above standard rates;
  - 3. Decisions of the court;
  - 4. Decisions regarding grant programs for which an appeal is available;
  - 5. Decisions regarding civil rights actions covered under the department's civil rights complaint procedures;
  - 6. A denial, suspension, or revocation of a license for which an appeal is available;
  - 7. Child placement or removal actions of Children's Administration under RCW 26.44.050.
- C. The citizen complaint procedures do not:
  - 1. Create substantive rights in any person;
  - 2. Create any rights to judicial or administrative hearings;
  - 3. Constitute an "adjudicative proceeding" or an "agency action," defined in RCW 34.05.101;
  - 4. Become subject to the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, Chapter 34.04 RCW.

### **3230 Confidentiality**

- A. The provisions of federal law, the Revised Code of Washington (RCW), the Washington Administrative Code (WAC), and CA policies regarding confidentiality of client records and information apply to this complaint procedure.

- B. Participation does not affect a complainant's ability to access confidential client records and information.
- C. Confidential records or information shall not be disclosed to complainants or other participants in the complaint review process unless authorized by law.
- D. Review panel members who are not DSHS employees shall sign a confidentiality agreement prior to participating in the review process.

### **3240 Non-Retaliation**

CA and its staff shall not intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any person who has complained, provided information, assisted, or participated in any manner in the complaint review process.

### **3250 Definitions**

See Appendix A for definitions related to citizen complaints.

## **3300 ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

### **3310 CA Advisory Committees**

RCW 43.20A.360 and RCW 74.13.031 govern the creation and utilization of a statewide Children's Services Advisory Committee as well as Regional Oversight Committees.

### **3311 State Children's Services Advisory Committee**

- A. The task of the statewide committee is to assist the Secretary in the development of a partnership plan for utilizing resources of the public and private sectors and to advise on all matters pertaining to child welfare, adoption, and related services.
- B. The statewide committee membership is a broad-based group of child and family advocates, at least one of whom is from the adoption community, who represent diverse geographic, cultural, political, service/treatment, and other professional constituencies.
- C. The statewide committee consists of 18 members -- two from each region and six at-large. At least five members must be from Regions 1 and 2. One member of each regional committee shall represent the region as a member of the statewide committee.
- D. Membership is by application to the Assistant Secretary, and members may serve a maximum of two three-year terms.

- E. The statewide committee holds 10 regularly scheduled one-day meetings each year. Travel arrangements and reimbursement are handled through the state office for the committee.

### **3312 Regional Committees**

Regional committees meet on a regular or semi-regular basis, on a schedule determined by the Regional Administrator, based on local needs and activities.